

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Applicant respectfully requests that this after-final amendment and reply be considered and entered, since it is believed to place this application in condition for allowance, and since it is not believed to require any further search and/or consideration.

Claims 1 and 15 are currently being amended (whereby those amendments are minor in nature and do not affect the scope of claims 1 and 15), and no claims are being canceled or added.

This amendment amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Claims 1-15 remain pending for consideration on the merits.

In the Office Action mailed October 29, 2003, claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,631,008 to Aoki; and claims 1, 8 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 10-078858. These rejections are traversed for at least the reasons given below.

In Aoki, a server outputs a device information inquiry signal via a communication line to other servers when a printing instruction is transmitted from a terminal to the server. When the server receives the device information from the other servers in response to the device information inquiry signal, it determines a priority order of printers to which printing data is to be transmitted, based on the device information. See column 2, lines 20-24 of Aoki, for example.

In Aoki, the server makes an inquiry to the terminal as to which printer is selected. The server converts image data transmitted from the terminal into printing data by use of a data processing program corresponding to the type of printer that is selected, based on the selection information transmitted from the terminal to the server. The server transmits the printing data to the printer that is selected, via a communication line. See column 2, lines 35-45 of Aoki, for example.

In JP 10-078858, a plurality of printer servers are connected to network cables, whereby each of the printer servers is connected to a printer. Each printer server has memory storage to store an obstacle history file on which obstacles are chronologically recorded. When any one of the printers is out of order, the printer server connected to this out-of-order printer queries the other printer servers about the obstacle history of their respective connected printers. As a result, the printer server selects, as a substitute printer, the printer having the lowest frequency of occurrence of obstacles. The printer server allows the substitute printer to output printing data. See paragraph [0011] of JP 10-078858, for example.

Now, turning to the presently pending invention according to independent claim 1 (independent claims 8 and 12 have similar features), an image-forming-job managing apparatus has a job transfer section that is configured to transfer an image-forming job stored in a job storage section to another image-forming job managing apparatus based on an output destination change command issued by a terminal. In contrast, JP 10-078858 does not have a structure remotely corresponding to such a job transfer section. Accordingly, claims 1, 8 and 12 are not anticipated by JP 10-078858.

In Aoki, a server automatically transmits image data to a printer selected by a terminal, in accordance with a priority order determined by the server. Thus, it is clear that Aoki does not change an output destination of a job by the server based on an output destination change command issued by a terminal.

Accordingly, independent claims 1, 8 and 12, as well as dependent claims 2-7, 9-11 and 13-15, are not anticipated by Aoki.

Furthermore, with respect to the dependent claims, the features recited in claims 14 and 15 allow a user at a terminal to make a rational determination as to which printer to switch a print job to, whereby such features are not disclosed or suggested by either Aoki or by JP 10-078858. Rather, in Aoki and in JP 10-078858, a server selects a printer to output a print job.

Accordingly, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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